United Nations S/2010/440

Security Council

Distr.: General
23 August 2010

Original: English

Identical letters dated 20 August 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I write to you to draw your attention to a developing matter of serious concern in the Middle East.

A group of individuals with suspected ties to the Hizbullah terrorist organization has announced that on Sunday, 22 August 2010, the vessel *Miriam* will depart from Tripoli, Lebanon, en route to the Gaza Strip via a port in Cyprus. There is also the possibility that the organizers would attempt to sail to the Gaza Strip via Northern Cyprus.

The stated intention of this vessel is to violate the existing naval blockade of Gaza, and some of its organizers have stated that Lebanese authorities offered their approval of this provocative act. In addition, there exists other information that an additional ship, the *Naji al-Ali*, will depart from a Lebanese port with the intention of violating the aforementioned naval blockade.

I wish to highlight that all goods that are not weapons or materiel for war-like purposes are now entering the Gaza Strip through appropriate mechanisms that ensure their delivery as well as their civilian nature. The organizers of the above-mentioned boats are fully aware of these internationally recognized and unimpeded channels to deliver aid to Gaza. However, the organizers — similar to previous attempts by others — seek to incite a confrontation and raise tension in our region.

Such confrontational actions by the organizers of these vessels, as well as those that offer their consent, is deeply troubling and requires the attention of the international community.

Given the ongoing armed conflict between the Hamas terrorist organization and the State of Israel compounded by the fact that these ships originate from Lebanon which remains in a state of hostility with Israel, Israel reserves its right under international law to use all necessary means to prevent these ships from violating the aforementioned naval blockade Furthermore, it cannot be ruled out that these vessels carry weapons or individuals with violent intentions.

At the Security Council meeting on 21 July 2010, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, B. Lynn Pascoe, stated: "Such convoys [vessels] are not helpful to resolving the basic economic problems of Gaza and needlessly carry the potential for escalation." On 23 July 2010, the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, Martin Nesirky, reiterated this position, stating:

Please recycle

> We've repeatedly said, and the Secretary-General has personally said, that it's important that, particularly right now, when proximity talks are going on and we're seeking to advance that process to direct talks, any actions which might provoke an adverse reaction and affect those talks, and affect security in the wider region, need to be avoided. There are established routes for supplies to enter by land and the Secretary-General and others, not least from UNRWA [United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East], have made if clear that this is the way aid should be delivered.

In view of these circumstances, Israel calls upon the Government of Lebanon to demonstrate responsibility and to prevent these boats from departing to the Gaza Strip. Such action will prevent any possible escalation. Israel further calls upon the international community to exercise its influence in order to prevent these boats from departing and to discourage their nationals from taking part in such action.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Gabriela **Shalev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

10-49279